



John L. Salomone
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR JEFF WRIGHT

MINUTES

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

February 12, 2008

Mayor Wright called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM in the Helen Nelson Room of the Newington Town Hall.

I PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II ROLL CALL

Councilors Present:

Councilor Banach
Councilor Boni
Councilor Bottalico
Councilor Bowen
Councilor Cohen
Councilor Lenares
Councilor Nagel
Councilor Nasinnyk
Mayor Wright

Staff Present:

John L. Salomone, Town Manager
Ed Meehan, Town Planner
Lori Verreault, Executive Assistant
Paul Boutot, Director of Information Systems and Technology

III AWARDS/PROCLAMATIONS

A Volunteer of the Year – Teresa Vainoris

Mayor Wright read the following proclamation:

WHEREAS, each year the Town Council recognizes someone who has voluntarily dedicated time and/or resources for the benefit of others and the community at large; and

WHEREAS, this year Teresa Vainoris is being recognized for her active involvement in Interfaith Community Action of Newington (ICAN), a volunteer service organization designed to assist individuals who are frail, elderly or otherwise in need with the performance of day-to-day household chores, minor repairs, shoveling of snow, raking of leaves, grocery shopping, and transportation to medical appointments; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Vainoris has served as Volunteer Coordinator since ICAN's inception, pairing requests for assistance with individuals who have registered as volunteers to perform various tasks; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Vainoris has undertaken many of the volunteer tasks personally in order to ensure prompt service when others are not available and derives much satisfaction from the betterment of ICAN's clients; and

WHEREAS, Teresa has also been very involved in encouraging young people to volunteer;

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Newington Town Council hereby designates Teresa Vainoris as its 2007 Volunteer of the Year in recognition of her volunteer activities for the welfare of the community as a whole, especially the elderly and frail or those in need of special assistance, and for serving as a positive role model and an example of all that can be accomplished through the efforts of volunteers.

Mayor Wright noted that a plaque in honor of Mrs. Vainoris and past Volunteer of the Year honorees will be displayed in the atrium of the Town Hall. He thanked Mrs. Vainoris for her efforts.

Mrs. Vainoris thanked her friends from ICAN, noting that the program is a group effort. She stated that the group has worked very hard to do various things to help others such as cleaning houses, cleaning playscapes, helping people bring their pets to a veterinarian and many other small things to show people that they care. She asked the public to get in touch for more information about the program. Mayor Wright asked about the best way for residents to get in touch with the organization, either for help or to volunteer. Mrs. Vainoris replied that the best way to do so is through Ken Freidenberg and the Human Services department.

The Councilors commented on Mrs. Vainoris' award and thanked her for her efforts. Councilor Cohen stated that ICAN provides the type of services which are desperately needed but without the program would often fall through the cracks. She stated that the program needs more publicity, and thanked Mrs. Vainoris and the ICAN volunteers for their efforts. Councilor Bowen thanked Mrs. Vainoris for her volunteerism, noting that in this day and age it is difficult to find people willing to step forward and help. He noted that most of Mrs. Vainoris' work is done behind the scenes, and only those receiving help are truly aware of her efforts. Councilor Nasinnyk stated that she is pleased that the Town has an interfaith program that is involved with helping others in the community, and that the ICAN program is particularly good because it helps anybody at any time whether they need long-term or short-term help. She stated that one of the beauties of the organization is that volunteers who don't have a lot of time can still help out. Councilor Nasinnyk commented that she hopes that others will be inspired to volunteer.

(TAPE RECORDING CUTS OUT HERE)

Town Manager Salomon noted that he gets calls from residents requesting help. He is able to forward these requests to the Human Services department which can refer the residents to the ICAN program. He thanked Mrs. Vainoris and the volunteers for their service.

Public Participation, re: Volunteer of the Year – Teresa Vainoris

Peter Vainoris, 66 Magnolia Street: Mr. Vainoris commented that he is proud of his wife, and thanked all of the ICAN volunteers. He noted that the ICAN program does not just provide an incidental service; the service can be life-altering.

Mayor Wright again congratulated Mrs. Vainoris and asked any residents who need help or would like to volunteer for the ICAN program to call Ken Freidenberg of the Human Services department.

Motion seconded by Councilor Bottalico. Motion passed 9-0.

IV PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL

Mikki Zadrowski 124 Michael Lane: Ms. Zadrowski stated that she represents the Newington Art League as its past President and founder. She addressed rumors that the Art League is going to lose its facilities. Ms. Zadrowski commented that the Art League is a successful venture and that League members love the current building as it provides a comfortable, convenient and stimulating environment for members and guest artists. She implored the Council to allow the Art League to continue and asked whether their building would be taken away. Town Manager Salomone replied that he would speak to Ms. Zadrowski regarding her concerns.

Susan (last name not available) Episcopal Road, Berlin CT: Susan stated that she also represents the Art League and hopes that the League will be provided a suitable new meeting place should it lose its current facilities. She stated that recent art shows have been wonderfully successful and that the current location is ideal for members as well as convenient for nearby seniors. She commented that the Newington Art League had recently invited the Berlin Art League to join their group due to the closing of Berlin's Art League, and that they had just welcomed eleven new members with an additional four prospective new members. She stated that the League has just celebrated its 25th anniversary, and asked the Council to support the group. Mayor

Wright replied that the League will have the full support of the Town should the group need to move to a new facility.

Joyce Brown, 57 Flagler Street: Ms. Brown stated that she has served as the President, Co-President, and Secretary of the Art League. She stated that the Art League is a good group, and asked the Town to spare the group the heartache of losing its facilities. She stated that many people have commented positively about the League, its facilities and all it gives to the Town. Ms. Brown stated that the League has always gotten along beautifully with its neighbors – the NCTV group. She stated that the League was not even made aware of the possibility that it would lose its building, it only found out when informed by NCTV members. She asked the Councilors to keep the well-being of the League in their hearts and minds.

Florence Dickie, 23 Frederick Street: Ms. Dickie commented that she hopes that the Art League will not have to move too far, and noted that their current facilities are ideal in both amenities and location. She stated that the current location is very convenient for seniors, and suggested that the League remain in or near its current location even if the senior housing is built in the area.

Bill Pollock, 28 Kirkham Street: Mr. Pollock spoke to the Council about the American Cancer Society’s sixth annual Relay for Life kickoff. He stated that the purpose of the Relay is to raise funds for the ACS. He stated that cancer will touch everyone at some point in his or her lives and it does not discriminate, noting that his wife has been battling cancer for six years. Mr. Pollock gave some information regarding the Relay and challenged the Council to form a team and participate in the event. He stated that signing up as a team and soliciting donations is a very easy process, and that \$0.81 of every dollar raised will go towards cancer research. He again challenged the Council to put political differences aside for one night and to participate in the Relay. Mr. Pollock left informational flyers for the Council and members of the public.

V CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

- A Approval of Revised “Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Regulations of the Town of Newington”

Councilor Bottalico moved the following:

RESOLVED:

Pursuant to Sec. 6-18 of the Newington Code of Ordinances, the Newington Town Council hereby approves amendments to the “Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations of the Town of Newington” as proposed by the Conservation Commission, subjected to a Public Hearing, and reviewed by the Town Council.

Motion seconded by Councilor Bowen. Motion passed 9-0.

- B Mid-Year Transfers

Councilor Bowen moved the following:

CERTIFICATION:

In accordance with Section 808 of the Town Charter, I hereby certify that there exists, free from encumbrances, in the following appropriations in the General Fund, the amounts listed below:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>
150	Finance	\$14,000
310	Engineering	<u>\$26,000</u>
	Total	\$40,000

Ann J. Harter, Director of Finance

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby transfers the above-certified funds in the General Fund to the following accounts in the General Fund:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>
180	Personnel	\$25,000
350	Sanitation	\$15,000
	Total	\$40,000

Motion seconded by Councilor Cohen. Motion passed 9-0.

C Adopt Revised "Town Council Rules of Procedure"

Councilor Boni moved the following:

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby adopts the revised "Rules of Procedure" of the Town Council as transmitted to the Town Council by the Town Council Rules Subcommittee, copy attached

Motion seconded by Councilor Cohen. Motion passed 9-0.

VI CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

A Affordable, Age-restricted Housing Update

Town Manager Salomone gave an overview of the Affordable Age Restricted Housing Study Committee's report and recommendations as well as the Committee's timeline of the project. He called Town Attorney Ben Ancona, Town Planner Ed Meehan and New Samaritan representative David Brown to the table to speak about the project.

Councilor Cohen commented that the Committee's recommendations are self-explanatory, and that there is no better option than to move forward with New Samaritan.

Town Manager Salomone explained that there are two scenarios for possible locations of the building site; the central part of the property or the northern part of the property. He noted that the project is in the very preliminary stages, and that he has spoken to NCTV members about the costs of relocation. Town Manager Salomone stated that tenants such as NCTV will be moved to suitable locations if necessary and the interests of the tenants will be preserved. Town Manager Salomone stated that the prospect of having the building on the northerly part of the property would be a good one for the neighborhood and surrounding properties.

Councilor Nasinnyk remarked that the current and previous Committees have done their due diligence in looking at various sites, and feels that there is no better site than the one being considered. She stated that it is a good project and that she is looking forward to seeing it move forward. Councilor Nagel concurred, and added that those in the area will have the ability to give input regarding the project. He stated that federal grants will allow improvements beyond what is listed in the original plan.

Mr. Meehan presented an overview of the project and the timeline to the Council. He stated that it will be a lengthy process – about two years if New Samaritan is awarded the 202 grant. He concurred with Councilor Cohen's opinions about the recommendations and stated that the two-year timeline can be achieved.

Town Attorney Ancona stated that he is comfortable with the documents and gave an explanation of the 202 grant program.

Mr. Brown thanked the Council for its support and stated that New Samaritan is looking forward to partnering with the Town.

Councilor Bowen asked whether the 202 grant applies to senior and disabled housing or senior housing only. Mr. Brown replied that the 202 grant applies to senior housing only, with disabled housing covered under a separate grant.

Councilor Boni asked about the advantages to moving the building to the northern part of the property. He also asked if the Town is sure that it will receive the grant to do so and if not, how it will be funded. Town Manager Salomone replied that some of the advantages are that placing the building on northern part of the property will create a buffer to other properties in the area, it will ease parking concerns and it will create an egress which will result in Wells Drive becoming a totally residential neighborhood. He stated that the Town should know about grant funding by fall of this year. Town Manager Salomone stated that the Town has a competitive application for the grant, but in the event that funding is not received they can go back to "plan A" and place the building in the central part of the property. Councilor Bowen requested that in the event that the Town is denied grant money the matter should be brought back before the Council to consider other funding options before resorting to building the structure on the central part of the property.

(TAPE RECORDING RESUMES AT THIS POINT)

Town Manager Salomone stated that the option will be on the table at the next meeting to move forward with the next step.

Deputy Mayor Lenares asked about the type of land on the north side of the property – whether it is a wooded area or a residential area. Mr. Meehan replied that it is a Town-owned wooded area with a topographic relief and some wetland areas located behind the former Board of Education building.

Mayor Wright commented that he is excited to move forward with this project, which will be very beneficial to the Town. He recognized the former Council for initiating the process, and noted that the Newington Housing Authority fully supports this project. Mayor Wright stated that the project will ultimately help 28 – 32 seniors in Town without costing the taxpayers any money.

B Realignment of Alumni Road/Maple Hill Intersection

Town Manager Salomone gave an overview of the topic, including a memo to the Council and a resolution, adopted in 2003, which reflects the events and the sentiments of the Council at that time. Town Manager Salomone remarked that any design considered for the area would incorporate a betterment of that area so that there will not be an opportunity for drivers to cut through the area, a major concern of the former Council at the time of the 2003 resolution. He stated that at this point the project is very preliminary, because the State reprogrammed the monies that were set aside for the realignment, so the Town would have to go through a new process with the State DOT to have them reconsider and reallocate funds to the Town. Town Manager Salomone elaborated that the Town has not even talked to the State at this point, and if the Council is in agreement with the suggestions regarding the project then the Town can take the project back to the DOT, assuming that the design will not adversely impact neighborhoods or safety of the area.

Mayor Wright commented that the Council in whole recognizes the need to look at this issue and ways to address the safety, improvement and traffic concerns of the "Cedar Street Corridor", an area of economic growth which extends from the Willard/Cedar to the Fenn/Cedar intersections. Mayor Wright stated that this is an important topic of conversation and it is important for the Council to take leadership in addressing the issue. He recommended that the Council considers putting together a resolution regarding the Town's commitment to the project so that the State DOT takes the Town seriously regarding the project. He also suggested the possibility of forming a committee of Old Farms neighborhood residents to represent the residents of the area.

Councilor Bottalico asked whether the DOT is currently working with developers in the Fenn Road/Cedar Street area. Town Manager Salomone replied in the affirmative. Councilor Bottalico asked whether this project can be tied in with the Fenn Road development project. Town Manager Salomone replied that the Fenn Road project is separate from the Old Farms project.

Mayor Wright commented about widening the bridge/overpass near where the bus way is going to be, and in the same corridor there are two bridges which will need to be addressed. Town Manager Salomone stated that there is a lot of activity all along Cedar Street right up to the Turnpike. He also mentioned a plan for a remedial effort on the Willard/Cedar intersection which is scheduled for spring 2008. Mr. Meehan elaborated that the Cedar/Willard intersection will be improved to include dedicated left turn lanes.

Councilor Bowen noted that there were two property owners who were originally going to sell their property to the Town in order to make space for the road realignment, one of whom eventually backed out and did not want to sell. He commented that before moving forward with the State the Council needs to make sure that there are still homeowners who are willing to sell, noting the recent Eminent Domain debacle in New London. Mr. Meehan commented that the concern with the original project was that people were going to use the area as a traffic cut through. Councilor Bowen agreed, and stated that there is a lot of work being contemplated for the entire area, including the bus way, hotel complex, Route 9 exit widening, etc. He cautioned that before getting the State involved the Council should task the TPZ to focus on the area and provide the Council recommendations for development. Councilor Bowen stated that there are proper ways to develop the area, but that the Council does not have the expertise to determine what they are, and if the Town is going to go to the State it has to know what it is getting into. Councilor Bowen stated that while he would be in favor of realigning the Maple Hill intersection it should not be done at the cost of ruining a percentage of the Town's roads with overwhelming traffic. Mr. Meehan stated that conceptual planning was done as a part of the Fuss and O'Neill accessibility study. He stated that the wild card of the area lies in the long range development of CCSU's land south of Cedar Street, which could be either a large traffic generator or a moot issue if CCSU can find another route for campus traffic on East Street. Councilor Bowen asked about the use of the area for hotel and housing, and expressed concern about use of the area for housing, citing a change of zoning in the area and tax drain concerns. Mr. Meehan clarified that the concept is not for family housing, rather one or two bedroom housing suitable for people who are working and want to have access to the bus way, Route 9. Councilor Bowen stated that there is not a way to limit housing to those who don't have children.

Councilor Banach remarked that he is a liaison to the Development Commission and requested that the Commission be included in the process. He stated that the Commission is making a concerted effort to look for development throughout Town, and reminded the Council that the Commission currently operates on a zero budget. He recommended that the Council considers funding the Development Commission, as a small investment will pay off down the line.

Councilor Bottalico asked about the cleanup requirements should 55+ housing be built on the National Welding site. Mr. Meehan stated that residential use would require the most stringent remediation, and due to cleanup and location senior housing would not be the best use for the site.

Mayor Wright remarked that studies have been done by the TPZ and the Development Commission on the area, and that there is a public safety issue with Alumni Road. He stated that from a microcosm standpoint the Town needs to take a look at the Alumni Road intersection, and that it is the Council's responsibility to work with the State on a resolution for the safety issue while creating a better neighborhood for the Old Farms area residents.

Councilor Bottalico asked about moving the parking lots on Alumni Road (across from the athletic fields) to the other side of the road as a part of the realignment. Mayor Wright stated that the parking lots will be a part of the puzzle.

Councilor Bowen reminded the Council that the State does not perform impact studies prior to proposing a project involving the Town's local roads, and cautioned the Council to represent the Town and protect the Town's interest in any decisions made in the partnership between the Town and the State.

Mayor Wright asked the Town Manager and Mr. Meehan to move forward with the process.

C Fire Training Tower Project Building Committee Report

Town Manager Salomone stated that the Fire Training Tower project was completed on time and slightly under budget. He stated that the Fire Training Tower Project Building Committee has submitted a report, and requests that the Council accepts the report and allows the Committee to disband.

Councilor Bowen, who served on the Committee, stated that the Committee was entirely run by firefighters who knew what they wanted, did their research and did a good job.

D New Website Overview

Town Manager Salomone informed the Council that the new Town website will be available starting on or about February 15, 2008. He gave a brief background of the site redesign, noting that the Town was looking for a way to manage citizens' requests and inquiries as well as a way to bring the current site up to date. Town Manager Salomone stated that there are two aspects of the redesign – the website itself and the Town Service Center, a

module in which online or phone requests are centralized and forwarded to the proper department for resolution and follow up. Town Manager Salomone stated that he is pleased with the website improvements and noted that it has potential to be an award winning website.

Paul Boutot, Director of Information Systems and Technology, presented the new website to the Council and gave an overview of its features including:

- A homepage with a left-hand pop out navigation menu which is categorized into logical groups
- A news and announcements page
- Calendars for the activities of various Town groups and departments
- An emergency alert section which would flash red in the event of an emergency and which contains a link with more information pertaining to the emergency.
- A Town Government information page which includes:
 - Pictures of the Mayor and Council with contact information and email addresses
 - Local government activities
 - Information on Town departments
- Photos of Town landmarks
- Forms and documents
- Business resources
- Residents' services
- E-Directory which lists contact information for all departments
- Interactive Town Service Center
- Signup form for news and announcements
- Maps and GIS
- Weather information – National Weather Service weather feed
- Property assessment records

Mr. Boutot cautioned that the site may experience some down time over the weekend during the switchover. He stated that all department sites will now fall under the Town website, with the exception of the Board of Education's site, which will be linked to the Town website.

Town Manager Salomone commented that many exciting additions have been made to the site and that future additions to the site are limitless. He remarked that it was done at a minimal cost. He thanked the members of the IT department for their efforts.

Councilor Bowen asked about the ability to use GIS data to find specific property locations. Mr. Boutot replied that it can be done internally, and that they are looking into the possibility of signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MDC which will allow the Town to use their software program, providing that the Town does not release that code to any other site. He stated that they can make that program into an external chasing site to access our internal GIS data.

Councilor Nasinnyk asked whether access to Town emails will change. Mr. Boutot replied that the access will be similar.

Mayor Wright thanked Mr. Boutot and the Town Manager for their efforts which will result in better connectivity to the Town government by the townspeople and reminded the public that all Councilors now have Town email addresses. He stated that Council email addresses consist of the first letter of the Councilor's first name, the Councilor's last name @newingtonct.gov (i.e. jwright@newingtonct.gov)

VII MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A Regular Meeting, January 22, 2008

Councilor Nasinnyk moved to accept the minutes of the regular meeting on January 22, 2008.

Motion seconded by Councilor Cohen. Motion passed 9-0.

B Special Meeting, January 26, 2008

Councilor Nagel noted that his name is spelled incorrectly in the minutes of the January 26, 2008 meeting.

Councilor Nasinnyk moved to accept the minutes of the January 26, 2008 special meeting.

Motion seconded by Councilor Cohen. Motion passed 9-0.

VIII WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER AND OTHER TOWN AGENCIES, OFFICIALS, OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC

A Council Liaison Reports

Councilor Nasinnyk announced on behalf of the Library Board that the Foley house has been razed.

Councilor Cohen reported on the following committees:

- Youth/Adult Council: is going forward with its Hoopla program and is also planning to promote its Six Feet of Influence program at the Extravaganza.
- West Meadow Cemetary Committee: is going forward with survey, weather permitting
- Commission on Aging: has received a grant giving them a Wii game system, and are looking to replace their television, either through a donation or through their own funds. Mayor Wright suggested that the Senior Center consider getting a projector television for the Wii system, as it would be less money and a larger screen.
- High School Field House Committee: planning to go for a bid including the entire project with deducted alternates rather than add-on alternates and are also going to get an updated estimate on the total budget.

Councilor Bowen commented that he feels bid should be a base bid with add-ons, but that the Field House Committee wishes to do it the other way around. Councilor Bottalico asked about the donations progress for the field house project. Councilor Bowen replied that last he'd heard they had raised about \$50,000.

Councilor Nagel reported on the following committees:

- CRCOG: Councilor Nagel has shared CRCOG's process with the Town Manager, CRCOG has asked for the Council's support on three issues:
 - Enhance support of the balance transportation strategy (busway)
 - Provide incentives for inter town cooperation and municipal service sharing
 - Continuation of the local share of the conveyance taxCRCOG requests to meet with the Council sometime in the future and it has gone over a draft of two-year goal plans
- NCTV Channel 14 Community Access Meeting: Councilor Nagel assured Channel 14 members that they will be properly relocated should their current building be taken down as part of the senior housing project.

Councilor Bowen remarked that NCTV is dealing with the issue of revenue sharing with Cox Cable in which there is a discrepancy in the revenue amount being received by NCTV. He stated that the Town Manager, Town Attorney and State Representative are investigating the issue.

Councilor Banach stated that the Development Commission has some interesting ideas for the center of Town, but that financial support from the Council is needed.

IX PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mike Pizzuto, 290 Old Farm Drive: Mr. Pizzuto stated that Alumni Road runs to the rear of his residence, and that he is aware of what has been going on in regards to Alumni Road over the past ten years, and asked the Council to collect input from both homeowners in the neighborhood and the State before moving forward with the Alumni Road project. He further stated that the Council should approach residents with a phone call or letter, especially the two homeowners who were to previously sell their properties for the project. Mr. Pizzuto stated that he is glad to see that the Alumni Road problem is again being addressed. He offered to volunteer or help out with the input, as he is familiar with the project and its progress over the past ten years. He noted that it is a safety concern and traffic concern which needs to be addressed, especially with proposed development of the "Gateway", and noted that for traffic purposes some types of new development would be preferable over other types. Mr. Pizzuto stated that the bridge near the gas station should be widened to create three lanes with a turning lane.

X REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor Cohen gave a reminder of the Kiwanis Club's meeting at Paradise Pizza on Monday, February 25 2008 in which the Mayor will give an update about his first 120 days in office. She stated that the meeting will start at 7:00 - come early for dinner. Councilor Cohen noted that the Mayor will take questions from the audience during his update.

Mayor Wright commented about the upcoming Relay for Life and Mr. Pollock's challenge to the Council to get involved. He stated that it would be a great idea for the Town Council/Board of Education to consider getting involved.

XI ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Bowen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:51pm.

Motion seconded by Councilor Nasinnyk. Motion passed 9-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mrs. Jaime Trevethan
Clerk of the Council